



SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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IN THE MATTER OF THE EDUCATION)	
CERTIFICATE OF)	OPP No. D21-10-028
)	
KEITH KUZAS)	FINAL ORDER
Certificate No. 507235J)	OF SUSPENSION
)	

After receiving and investigating a notification from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) regarding the above referenced educator, and based upon the facts available as of the date of this Proposed Order, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, through his undersigned designee, institutes this proceeding and finds, as described below, that KEITH KUZAS (“Educator”) engaged in acts of unprofessional conduct to include WAC 181-87-055, WAC 181-86-013 and WAC 181-86-014, and does hereby SUSPEND the Educator’s Washington Education Certificate No. 507235J for not less than 60 days with conditions enumerated below, based on the following Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law:

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. On July 3, 2014, the Educator was issued Washington Education Certificate No. 507235J. The Educator’s certificate is a substitute teacher certificate and has no expiration date.
2. On August 11, 2021, the Office of Professional Practices (“OPP”) within the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (“OSPI”) received notification from the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) that the Educator had an education license/certificate sanctioned in another state.

3. From August 1998 to June 2012, the Educator was employed with the Paramount Unified School District in Paramount, California.
4. On January 10, 2012, a school psychologist within the Paramount Unified School District filed a complaint with the School District alleging hostile and harassing behaviors towards her by the Educator.
5. From November 1, 2012, to January 28, 2013, the Educator was employed in the Garland Independent School District in Garland, Texas.
6. On June 4, 2013, the Educator submitted his electronic application for certification to OSPI.
7. From August 2015 to June 2017, the Educator was employed with the Greenfield Union School District in Bakersfield, California as a 3rd and 4th grade teacher.
8. During the 2017-2018 school year, the Educator was employed by the Alisal Union School District in Salinas, California.
9. On December 6, 2017, the Educator was issued a Letter of Reprimand by John Steinbeck Elementary School Principal Christine Palmer for aggressive and harassing behaviors towards female staff members. After being issued the Letter of Reprimand, the Educator displayed aggressive behaviors towards staff members at a staff function.
10. On or about December 6, 2017, the Educator was placed on administrative leave.
11. On February 14, 2018, the Educator signed a Resignation and Settlement Agreement with the Alisal Union School District after the School District raised concerns about the Educator's performance in interacting with colleagues. Per the agreement, the Educator resigned his employment effective April 30, 2018.

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12. On May 9, 2018, the Educator came to John Steinbeck Elementary School. After being confronted by Principal Palmer, the Educator displayed aggressive behaviors towards her and in the presence of students.

13. On May 11, 2018, the Educator was contacted, via phone, by law enforcement and informed that he was no longer allowed on John Steinbeck Elementary School property and that if he returned, he would be arrested for trespassing.

14. On May 15, 2018, Principal Palmer filed a Request for Civil Harassment Restraining Order against the Educator in Monterey County Superior Court. On May 25, 2018, a Temporary Restraining Order was issued against the Educator. On August 23, 2018, after a hearing, the Temporary Restraining Order was dismissed.

15. On or about March 25, 2019, the Educator submitted electronic application for employment with the Galt Union School District in Galt, California. In the application, the Educator intentionally:

- a. Omitted his employment from the Alisal Union School District;
- b. Omitted listing the reasons for leaving employment with the Greenfield Union School District and the Paramount Unified School District;
- c. Answered 'No' to the question of having ever been dismissed or asked to resign; and,
- d. Failed to disclose he resigned from Alisal Union School District mid-year per a Resignation and Settlement Agreement.

16. In October 2019, the Educator displayed erratic and hostile behaviors towards colleagues and administrators. On October 9, 2019, the Educator was placed on administrative leave.

17. On November 4, 2019, the Galt Union School District Superintendent filed a Statement of Charges and Recommendation for Dismissal with the Galt Union School District School Board.

The Educator filed a timely appeal and requested a hearing.

18. On December 11, 2019, after a hearing, sufficient legal grounds were found to terminate the Educator's employment contract with the Galt Union School District.
19. On December 13, 2019, the Educator's employment with the Galt Union School District was terminated.
20. On January 13, 2020, the Educator began employment with the Carpinteria Unified School District in Summerland, California as a substitute teacher.
21. On January 23, 2020, at Carpinteria High School, the Educator vandalized his classroom and displayed aggressive behaviors towards the school principal. The Educator was arrested by Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Office deputies, charged with Vandalism and booked into the Santa Barbara County Jail. An Emergency Protective Order was also issued against the Educator.
22. On January 23, 2020, the Educator's employment with the Carpinteria Unified School District was terminated.
23. On January 30, 2020, the Carpinteria Unified School District filed for a Restraining Order against the Educator.
24. On February 20, 2020, a Misdemeanor Complaint was filed in Santa Barbara County Superior Court charging the Educator with the misdemeanor offense of Vandalism for his actions at Carpinteria High School on January 23, 2020.
25. On March 8, 2021, in Santa Barbara County Superior Court, the Educator was found guilty, by plea, of the misdemeanor offense of Disturbing the Peace and sentenced to unsupervised probation for a period of one (1) year.
26. On April 23, 2021, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing suspended the Educator's California teaching credentials for a period of one hundred twenty (120) days from May 23, 2021, through September 19, 2021. The Educator did not appeal the suspension of his California teaching credentials.

27. On November 4, 2021, the Educator, after receiving notification he was under investigation by OPP, emailed the OPP investigator. The Educator stated that he had worked for one school year in Washington and, in his response to allegations of misconduct, the State of California had reinstated his credentials.

II. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. Chapter 28A.410 RCW gives the Professional Educator Standards Board the authority to develop regulations determining eligibility for and certification of personnel employed in the common schools of the state of Washington. OSPI acts as the administrator of those statutes and regulations and has the authority to issue, reprimand, suspend, and revoke education certificates. RCW 28A.410.010; RCW 28A.410.090. Chapters 181-86 and 181-87 of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) further implement OSPI's authority.

2. OSPI has jurisdiction over the Educator and the subject matter of this action.

3. The Educator committed acts of unprofessional conduct pursuant to WAC 181-87-055, WAC 181-86-013, and WAC 181-86-014 for intentional falsification and omission of material facts on applications for employment and aggressive behaviors towards school property and personnel.

4. There is a clear and convincing evidence that the Educator committed acts of unprofessional conduct pursuant to WAC 181-86-170.

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5. Pursuant to WAC 181-86-080, eleven factors, at a minimum, are to be considered to determine the appropriate level and range of educator discipline:

- (1) The seriousness of the act(s) and the actual or potential harm to persons or property;
- (2) The person's criminal history including the seriousness and amount of activity;
- (3) The age and maturity level of participant(s) at the time of the activity;
- (4) The proximity or remoteness of time in which the acts occurred;
- (5) Any activity that demonstrates a disregard for health, safety or welfare;
- (6) Any activity that demonstrates a behavioral problem;
- (7) Any activity that demonstrates a lack of fitness;
- (8) Any information submitted regarding discipline imposed by any governmental or private entity as a result of acts or omissions;
- (9) Any information submitted that demonstrates aggravating or mitigating circumstances;
- (10) Any information submitted to support character and fitness; and
- (11) Any other relevant information submitted.

6. Based on the foregoing facts and considering them in light of the eleven factors enumerated in WAC 181-86-080, and in light of WAC 181-86-070, WAC 181-87-055, WAC 181-86-013 and WAC 181-86-014, the Educator's education certificate should be suspended for unprofessional conduct and a behavioral problem which endangers the educational welfare or personal safety of students, teachers, or other colleagues within the educational setting.

7. Additionally, OPP has considered the 120-day suspension that was issued on April 23, 2021, by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing from May 23, 2021, through September 19, 2021.

III. ORDER

THEREFORE, it is hereby ordered that the Washington Education Certificate No. 507235J of KEITH KUZAS is **SUSPENDED**. The Educator may not request reinstatement of his education certificate for at least sixty (60) days from the effective date of this ORDER.

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KEITH KUZAS
FINAL ORDER OF SUSPENSION

REINSTATEMENT of Keith Kuzas' education certificate shall require:

- (1) The Educator must successfully complete an in-person ANGER MANAGEMENT course, preapproved by OSPI. The Educator will provide proof of completion of the course prior to requesting reinstatement;
- (2) The Educator must successfully complete a PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION which validates his ability to have unsupervised access to students in a school environment by a licensed psychologist/psychiatrist preapproved by OSPI;
- (3) The Educator shall provide written consent for OPP to release documents to the provider for purposes of completing the evaluation;
- (4) The Educator, if treatment is recommended as a result of the evaluation, shall complete any and all recommended treatment and provide evidence of successful completion or, if continuing treatment is recommended, provide proof of continued compliance in the program to OPP;
- (5) The Educator shall sign a consent allowing the examining psychologist/psychiatrist to provide OPP a summary of the Educator's treatment and the results of his/her evaluation.
- (6) The Educator must submit a new application, including Character and Fitness Supplement, provided by OPP;
- (7) The Educator must complete a fingerprint-based criminal background check through both the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Washington State Patrol;
- (8) The Educator's fingerprint background check must return with no criminal convictions, occurring after the date of issuance of a Final Order of Suspension that are listed in WAC 181-86-013, RCW 28A.410.090, or any felony convictions; AND
- (9) The Educator shall assume all costs of complying with the requirements of this Order.

DATED this 23rd day of August 2023.

Signed: CHRIS REYKDAL
Superintendent of Public Instruction
State of Washington

Signed: Matthew A. Schultz
Chief Legal and Civil Rights Office